

USDA Foreign Agricultural Service

# GAIN Report

Global Agricultural Information Network

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## Costa Rica

**Post:** San Jose

### The supermarket sector is growing in Costa Rica

**Report Categories:**

Retail Food Sector

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**Report Highlights:**

By 2015, Costa Rica could expect to have up to 90 new supermarket stores per recent predictions from the biggest supermarket chains.

**General Information:**

Expectations for growth in the supermarket sector are high in Costa Rica. Expansion to a possible 90 new stores is calculated for 2014 by looking at data from Corporacion Megasuper, Grupo Gessa, Automercado and Walmart.

Megasuper, which was bought by a Colombian corporation called "Olimpica," currently has 83 points of sale nationwide and its goal is to reach 100 supermarket stores for 2014, therefore increasing by four new locations each year. While Olimpica is the third largest retail group in Columbia, this company is not planning to expand to the Central American region in the near future since they are focusing on Costa Rica first.

Automercado will open one or two stores per year. This chain has 14 stores and is expecting to reach 19 within the next five years. They are also considering the possibility of expanding operations to other Central American countries in a short term.

Meanwhile, Grupo Gessa could demonstrate a similar performance to Automercado in the coming years, perhaps inaugurating as many as six or seven stores every 12 months. In 2010, Gessa opened two new stores in the Super Compro format, one Perimercado and re-opened another Super Compro. With the opening of each of those stores, Gessa provided employment for 20 people per store.

Another big store chain is PriceSmart, however, this company currently has no plans to open more stores in Costa Rica in the near future. Instead they are focusing on openings in Panama and Dominican Republic.

Walmart did not provide any information on the number of stores they are expecting to open in the near future. However, it has opened an average of 10 supermarkets per year in different formats as Mas X Menos, Maxi Bodega, Hipermas and Pali. In 2008 they opened 13 stores, in 2009 65 locations opened and in 2010 they opened 10. Walmart will close this year with 180 stores in Costa Rica as: 134 Palis, 15 Maxi Bodegas, 25 Mas X Menos and 6 Hipermas stores. This firm opened 20 new stores in the rest of Central America this year, investing approximately \$53 millions in the whole region.